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Tips for Tap and Drinking Water by [George Benson](#)

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Though tap water is generally clean and safe to drink the moment it flows through the tap and into your glass due to stringent rules regulating water treatment (this is in reference to chemical additions), Ontario residents are often concerned about hard water (this is natural) and its effect on hot tubs, water heaters, and even their hair and skin as well as levels of iron. Fortunately, numerous options exist that allow consumers to quickly and affordably solve these problems and put their concerns to rest.

Urban Water Solutions

It's not unusual for city tap water to have an off-taste or contain excessive levels of calcium and magnesium. The following water solutions are often used by city residents:

â€¢ Water dispensers â€” If you're primarily concerned about drinking water quality, a water cooler is one of the easiest solutions available. Dispensers are available in a variety of sizes including large water coolers for the office and smaller, countertop models for the home. Once in place, you can either buy purified bottled water from a water franchise

â€¢ Water softeners â€” If your tap water contains excessive amounts of calcium and magnesium, it is considered "hard" water. How can you tell if you have hard water? Your dishes come out of the dishwasher cloudy and etched; your hair is dull; your laundry comes out stiff and dull; you notice calcium deposits on faucets, pipes, showerheads, and appliances; and soap and shampoo barely lather up. A water softener softens the water, leading to shinier hair and cleaner clothes as well as protecting appliances and plumbing from corrosion and scale build up.

Rural Water Solutions

Residents in rural areas can benefit from water dispensers and softeners as well as the following solutions that address common issues with well water and rural water sources:

â€¢ Ultraviolet water systems â€” Well and surface water often contains microorganisms, requiring the water to be disinfected before it's considered safe to drink. Ultraviolet water systems use ultraviolet radiation to disinfect water. Ultraviolet water devices are available in consumer models intended for home use.

â€¢ Reverse osmosis â€” These consumer water systems use a special technology known as reverse osmosis that purifies water by passing it through a semi-permeable membrane. Once water has been filtered through a reverse osmosis water treatment system, it is sparkling clean, fresh, and purified. Since chemicals and minerals are filtered out, the water tastes better after the process.

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[George Benson](#) - About Author:

In addition to the above a [drinking water](#) treatment systems, it's smart to have your tap or well water

tested periodically for contaminants. Ontario consumers occasionally encounter iron water which is readily apparent when brown or rust-coloured water comes out of the tap. Unappetizing in appearance and generally considered safe in low levels, a [iron water](#) also has a metallic taste. Water purification steps vary based on symptoms, the source, and water test results.

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